

EEH NEWS

Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health

School of Public Health and Health Professions (SPHHP)

University at Buffalo, State University of New York (SUNY)

<http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/epidemiology-and-environmental-health>



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Karen DeGarmo, editor

The Chair's Corner



Dear EEH Colleagues, Students, Alumni and Friends:

Spring is in the air, which means that the end of the academic year is fast approaching. We have a wonderful group of students who are presenting their culminating projects in the next month or so, including presentations of PhD dissertations, MS theses and MPH integrative projects. It is always exciting to see the significant work that is being done by EEH students. I encourage you to attend as many of the presentations of student work as possible. There is much to be learned from the wide array of projects.

Public Health Week is coming in April. Here in Buffalo, we celebrate Public Health "week" all month long—all year long, in fact. Be sure to check out the many events that have been scheduled during the month of April and participate in as many as you can. Join the [SPHHP step challenge!](#) And be sure to attend the Saxon Graham lecture where there will be a presentation about what we know about diet and disease presented by a leader in nutritional epidemiology who has been very involved in the development of dietary recommendations in the US.

I wish you all the very best in this very busy time of year. As always, please be sure to let me or the other faculty and the staff know if there is any way that we can help you.

Jo Freudenheim, PhD

UB Distinguished Professor and
Interim Chair

Hello to All

It's that time for another installment of the newsletter. The fall semester is done and we have started the spring. There is always something happening at EEH. Make sure you read all the wonderful things done by the faculty, students and staff. Enjoy the sunshine!

Karen DeGarmo



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Note

People listed below with a two digit year after the degree received this degree from EEH. For example, PhD '15, degree awarded in 2015.

Welcome New Faculty and Staff



The department would like to welcome **Katarzyna Kordas**, PhD, who joined EEH as an associate professor in January 2016. Kordas most recently was at the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom. Her research focuses on the interactions of heavy metals and nutrition in child growth and development in low and moderate income settings.

Monica Nowak, BS, joined the department in the Women's Health Research Center as a research support specialist in November 2015.



Korianne Sulzbach, BA, joined the department in the Women's Health Research Center as a research support specialist in January 2016. She will be receiving her MPH degree from Daemen College this spring 2016. Her graduate practicum was completed within the Department of Medicine at Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI) where she studied the role of integrative medicine in cancer care for palliative care and survivorship.

Paula Vincent, PhD, joined the Systems-oriented Global Childhood Obesity Intervention Program, Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health as a part-time research scientist in December 2015. Vincent received her PhD in social psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles, CA in 1999. For the past 14 years, she has worked as a project director on projects located at the Research Institute on Addictions (RIA) and more recently in the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior (CHHB) in SPHHP.



Yong Zhang, MD, PhD, joined the Systems-oriented Global Childhood Obesity Intervention Program, Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health as a visiting research scholar in November 2015. He is an associate professor in the department of Nutrition and Food

Hygiene, School of Public Health and Management, Chongqing Medical University, China. Zhang received both his MD and PhD degrees from Chongqing Medical University. His main research interests include diet and living behaviors changing and development for the benefits of chronic non- infectious diseases. In 2015 Zhang received a grant from the Amsterdam Health and Technology Institute to develop a mHealth based hypertension intervention in living lab settings (i.e., a real-life in community).



Jinzhou Zhu, MD, MS, joined the Systems-oriented Global Childhood Obesity Intervention Program, Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health as a visiting research scholar in November 2015. He is PhD candidate in the department of Gastroenterology at Zhejiang University, China. Zhu received both his MD and MS degrees from Xuzhou Medical College, China. His main research interests include epidemiology of fatty liver, biomarkers for digestive diseases, and adipogenesis in alcoholic metabolism.

Fond Farewell

Kristina Young, MS '85, retired from the department January 1. Kristina worked with many students, faculty and staff during her time at EEH. She served as co-director of the MPH Health Services Administration concentration for many years. She is currently working on a revision of her very popular textbook on health care organizations. She continues to be a presence in EEH, providing lectures in health services administration courses. She will be greatly missed for her knowledge and dedication to students and EEH.

Alumni News

Jacqueline Mix, PhD '15, MPH '08, has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at Emory University in the Center for Nursing Data Science in the Emory Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing.

Michelle Roberts, PhD '16, has accepted a postdoc position in the Channing Division of Network Medicine, Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham and Women's Hospital, in Boston, MA.

Alexandra Sullivan, MPH '15, has a position as a clinical research coordinator at Columbia University's Center for Behavioral Cardiovascular Health.

Gary Zirpoli, PhD '16, has accepted a postdoc position at Harvard University School of Public Health and Massachusetts General Hospital, in Boston, MA.

Faculty/Student Presentations

John Violanti, PhD, presented his talk entitled "Suicide in Law Enforcement: Similarities to the Military" at the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (IUS) meeting in Chicago, IL on Oct. 31, 2015.

Violanti also presented a poster “Benefitting from Katrina: Differences in Posttraumatic Growth between Men and Women Police Officers” at the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) meeting in New Orleans, LA in November 2015.

Youfa Wang, MD, PhD, was invited to give a talk at a WHO workshop on obesity, held in Lyon, France in December 2015.

Honors and Awards



Henry Lin, MD, PhD, student in the MS program, was awarded the Knights Templar Eye Foundation Travel Grant.



Shawn Mathew, BA, student in the MPH environmental health (EH) concentration, received an award from the SPHHP Office of Global Health Initiatives (OGHI) for field training in India during the winter session.



Zuwena Plata, BS, student in the MPH epidemiology (EPI) concentration, received an award from the OGHI for her fieldwork this past summer.



Zhengqi Tan, MBBS, student in the MPH EPI concentration, was nominated and selected to serve as one of the SPHHP Public Health Ambassador for 2015-2016.



John Violanti, PhD, was nominated for the Charles C. Shepard Award by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) for his significant contribution to the field of occupational safety and health.



Jean Wactawski-Wende, PhD '89, was appointed to the rank of SUNY Distinguished Professor in November 2015. In addition, The Women's Health Initiative has been selected as the winner of the 2016 AACR Team Science Award. Wactawski-Wende has a leadership role in the WHI in Buffalo and in the national study.



Yilmaz Yoruk, BS, student in the MPH HSA concentration, received an award from OGHI for field training in India during the winter session.

Robert O'Shea Student Travel Award



Ajay Myneni, MBBS, MPH, received a Robert O'Shea Travel award for his abstract submission entitled “Raw Garlic Consumption and Risk of Lung Cancer in a Chinese Population” to the American Public Health Association (APHA) meeting in Chicago, IL in November 2015.

Preventive Medicine Residency Program

Milind Chaudhari, MD, PhD, published a paper entitled “The Effects of Experimental Sleep Apnea on Cardiac and Respiratory Functions in 6 and 18 Month Old Dystrophic (mdx) Mice.” PLoS One 2016;11(1):e0147640. PMID: 26808526.

Research News

Michael LaMonte, PhD, MPH, is PI on a new, one year, \$31,000 award from the Innovative Micro-Programs Accelerating Collaboration in Themes (IMPACT) for a project entitled “Methylglyoxal Could Mediate the Relationship between Infections and Diabetes: A Method Development and Feasibility Study.” Co-investigators are Richard Browne, PhD, Robert Genco, DDS, PhD, Yijun Sun, PhD, Jiwei Zhao, PhD, and Maria Tsompana, PhD.

Arthur Michalek, PhD, MS '80, received a new one year, \$15,000 award from the P² Collaborative of WNY/NYS Department of Health for the project entitled “Population Health Improvement Program.” The project started January 2015 with funding delayed until the end of October. Michalek will represent the Division of Health Services Policy and Practice (HSPP) and serve on the Advisory Team to help design, measure, and demonstrate population health improvement in support of the goals and objectives identified in the Population Health Improvement Program (PHIP). Jerome Yates, MD, MPH, is a co-investigator.

Xuefeng Ren, MD, PhD, is PI on a new 5 month, \$24,850 project funded from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences for the CTSA Pilot Program entitled “CTSA Pilot: Inheritable Epigenetic (DNA methylation) Biomarkers and Actions of Arsenic Exposure in its Carcinogenic Activity.” The study will determine whether arsenic exposure induces arsenic-specific inheritable DNA methylation changes, and to identify inheritable DNA methylation biomarkers that are transmitted from early generation and associated with arsenic-induced carcinogenesis. Daniel Gaile, PhD, is a co-investigator.

John Violanti, PhD, attended a presentation by US President Barack Obama at the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) annual conference in Chicago, IL on Oct. 27, 2015.

Youfa Wang, MD, PhD, is a co-investigator with Xiaozhong Wen, MD, PhD, from the Department of Pediatrics, on a new, 5 month, \$24,850 project funded from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences for the CTSA Pilot Program entitled “CTSA Pilot: Pilot Study on Pediatric Obesity Prevention by Maternal Smoking Cessation in Pregnancy and Lactation.” The study will examine the

effects of maternal smoking cessation intervention in pregnancy on infant gain and examine the effect of maternal smoking abstinence intervention in lactation and infant post-weaning gain among women who have successfully quit smoking in pregnancy.

Saxon Graham Lecture on April 29

Mark your calendars! The 2016 Saxon Graham Lecture will be held on Friday, April 29 from 12:00-1:30 pm in G26 Farber Hall with a reception starting at 11:30.

Linda Van Horn, PhD, RD, Professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Associate Dean for Faculty Development in the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University will present her talk entitled “*Diet Data and Disease: Truth or Consequences?*”

The annual lecture honors Dr. Saxon Graham, who chaired the Department from 1981-1991.

Congratulations to Our Graduates

The following students successfully completed all degree requirements for degree conferrals in February 2016.

PhD Epidemiology

Michelle Roberts, MA, “*Genetic Variation and Protein Expression of Metastasis-Related Genes as Markers of Tumor Aggressiveness, Recurrence and Survival among Breast Cancer Patients.*” Committee members: Christine Ambrosone, PhD '95 (major professor), Jo Freudenheim, PhD, and Michael Higgins, PhD. Michelle is doing postdoctoral research at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston.

Michelle Sahli, MS '12, “*Associations between Dietary Factors and Diabetic Retinopathy and the Optometrists’ Practices in Advising about Lifestyle Study.*” Committee members: Amy Millen, PhD (major professor), Heather Ochs-Balcom, PhD '04, Richard Donahue, PhD, MPH, and William Brady, PhD. Michelle is now an assistant professor at the University of Michigan-Flint.

Gary Zirpoli, MA, “*Supplement Use, Physician Recommendations, and Chemotherapy-Induced Peripheral Neuropathy in a Breast Cancer Clinical Trial.*” Committee members: Christine Ambrosone, PhD '95 (major professor), Susan McCann, PhD '98, RD, Lara Sucheston-Campbell, PhD. Gary now has a position as a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University School of Public Health and Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA.

MS Epidemiology

Henry Lin, MD, PhD, “*Association between Dietary Xanthophyll Intake and Early Age-Related Macular Degeneration.*” Committee members: Amy Millen, PhD (major professor), Michael LaMonte, PhD, MPH, and William Brady, PhD. Henry is now doing a medical residency in ophthalmology at the Ross Eye Institute in Buffalo.

MPH Epidemiology

Mattie Dibbell, BS, “*Breast Cancer Disparities: Nature or Nurture?*” Committee members: Heather Ochs-Balcom, PhD '04 (major professor) and Amy Millen, PhD.

Ramesh Pandit, MBBS, “*Association between Body Fat, and Body Mass Index, and Serum Lipids, in Older Populations.*” Committee members: Michael LaMonte, PhD, MPH (major professor) and Carl Li, MD, MPH. Ramesh is a resident physician at the Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education (WCGME) in Scranton, PA.

Welcome New EEH Students

Please welcome the following new student this spring.

MPH Environmental Health

Shawn Mathew, BA, social science interdisciplinary, University at Buffalo.

Supporting the Educational and Research Mission of EEH

We are very appreciative of the support that we have received from many of you. Donations to the department are used for scholarships, for special seminars such as the Saxon Graham Lecture and to assist students in their research and education. Credit card donations can be made online at www.giving.buffalo.edu. Select the “Use My Gift For” box and search on “epidemiology” for EEH fund options if you want your donation to be used for EEH. If you would like, you can tell us how you want your fund used, e.g., to support student fellowship, awards, research seed grants, or the teaching and research programs.